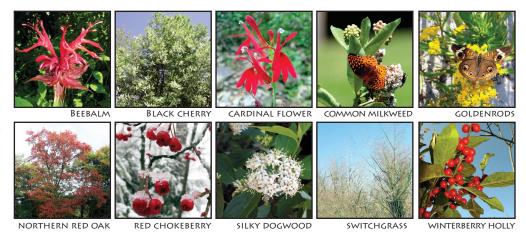# MAY

## The native way

*Native plants* — or plants that either occur naturally, have developed, or have existed for many years in a given area — play a vital role in sustaining Maryland's ecosystems. Sitting at the base of the food chain, they support many types of insects, which in turn support larger reptiles, amphibians and mammals. As an added bonus, many **NATIVE PLANTS LOOK BEAUTIFUL** in backyards and gardens, and famously require less work than non-natives.

Plants introduced from other parts of the world in different types of environments can mean big trouble for the ecosystems that natives work so hard to support. These *invasive species* can aggressively take over a forest, stream or open land, robbing everything else of space, sunlight and food. They tend to spread quickly and can be very difficult (and costly) to remove. In fact, almost half the rare, threatened or endangered species in the nation are listed as such **BECAUSE OF SPREADING INVASIVES**.

## Name that plant!

To the right are photos of the top ten native plants in Maryland. Explore your backyard or local park to see how many you can spot. If you have a smartphone or tablet with you, you can use apps such as **LeafSnap**, **NatureGate** and **PlantNet** to identify species on the spot!

BEEBALM  BLACK CHERRY  CARDINAL FLOWER  COMMON MILKWEED  GOLDENRODS

NORTHERN RED OAK  RED CHOKEBERRY  SILKY DOGWOOD  SWITCHGRASS  WINTERBERRY HOLLY

## WORD SEARCH — Find the following words in the puzzle below!

1. Backyard
2. Beebalm
3. Ecosystem
4. Garden
5. Goldenrod
6. Holly
7. Invasives
8. Milkweed
9. Native
10. Plant

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T S O Y A L G D T U D B I C G I P S M N V X T P B
U O E E L A O W Y G O N E N Q N H T M A R B D N E
Q F Y V R L H S D D R D C E J L G D N T W X H L I
D X D D I X O Q Z G N V L D B G R Q J I T N A L P
M L E Y A S E H Q W E A Y L M A G H I V J K R A Z
S N N I U K A Q W U D X X C Y I L S B E S D K A G
N O B W W M P V I L L W A K N O Q M X Y O D F N L
V F R V R E Q P N H O N C E O D H F P W U A S D I
M E T S Y S O C E I G A N X M O Y M Q U M N V O N
M I L K W E E D S O B P X I Q Y N N E K E S G C O
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